

Message Text

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TO ALL AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC POSTS IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS PRIORITY

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, AO, CG

SUBJECT: DEPARTMENT BRIEFING - MARCH 24

1. THE FOLLOWING Q'S AND A'S ARE EXCERPTED FROM THE
MARCH 24 DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING.

2. Q: YESTERDAY CONGRESSMAN DRINA' OF MASSACHUSETTS TOLD
A PRESS CONFERENCE, "I HAVE LEARNED THAT ONE HALF OF ALL
THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE WHICH THE U.S. IS GIVING TO AFRICA
WILL GO TO ZAIRE." THE QUESTION IS WILL THE STATE
DEPARTMENT EITHER CONFIRM OR DENY CONGRESSMAN DRINEN'S
ANNOUNCEMENT?

A: WELL, I HAVE TO CHECK ON THE FIGURES. I'LL TAKE THE
QUESTION. THIS IS PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE AND HAS BEEN FOR
QUITE A WHILE. (FOLLOWING ANSWER PROVIDED ON FOLLOW-UP
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BASIS: IN FISCAL YEAR 1976 WHEN AFRICA WAS ALLOTTED
37.7 MILLION IN FMS CREDITS, ZAIRE WAS THE RECIPIENT OF
19 MILLION DOLLARS OF THAT AMOUNT. IN THE TRANSITIONAL
QUARTER, WHEN AFRICA WAS ALLOTTED A TOTAL OF 25 MILLION
DOLLARS, ZAIRE WAS ALLOCATED 10 MILLION DOLLARS. FISCAL
YEAR 1977 ALLOCATION FOR AFRICA TOTALLED 63.5 MILLION
DOLLARS, OF WHICH 28 MILLION WAS ALLOTTED TO ZAIRE.

3. Q: NOW IF I COULD FOLLOW THIS UP. I LEARNED FROM THE UNITED STATES CATHOLIC CONFERENCE TODAY THAT PRESIDENT - FOR - LIFE MOBUTU SESE SEKO, HAS AMONG OTHER THINGS EXPELLED CARDINAL MULULA AND CLOSED DOWN THE POPE JOHN 23RD SEMINARY, CLOSED DOWN THE MAGAZINE CHRISTIAN AFRICA AFTER IT PUBLISHED THE CARDINAL'S DENUNCIATION OF MOBUTU'S ORDERING EVERYONE TO CHANGE THEIR CHRISTIAN NAMES TO AFRICAN NAMES. AS WELL AS MOBUTU'S ELIMINATION OF CHRISTMAS AS A HOLIDAY, AS WELL AS MOBUTU'S ATTEMPT TO ORGANIZE CELLS OF THE PEOPLES REVOLUTIONARY MOVEMENT IN THE CATHOLIC SEMINARY, THAT THE CARDINAL OBJECTED TO. MY QUESTION IS THIS, SINCE COL. MOBUTU SEIZED POWER AND REFUSES TO ALLOW ANY OPPOSITION PARTY, HOW CAN WE JUSTIFY SENDING HIM MILLIONS IN SUPPLIES, IN VIEW OF SECTION 502 B OF THE FOREIGN ASSISTANCE ACT?

A: WHICH?

4. Q: WELL SPECIFICALLY, PROHIBITS SECURITY ASSISTANCE TO ANY GOVERNMENT WHICH ENGAGES IN A CONSISTENT PATTERN OF GROSS VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNIZED HUMAN RIGHTS.

A: WELL, I'VE GIVEN, ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS, THE RATIONALE FOR OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE.

5. Q: IN LIGHT OF ALL OF THIS CONDUCT BY MR. MOBUTU, BY UNCLASSIFIED

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PRESIDENT-FOR-LIFE MOBUTU, DO YOU STILL FEEL THAT IT'S APPROPRIATE IN VIEW OF 502 B? OR DON'T YOU THINK THESE ARE GROSS VIOLATIONS? I MEAN THESE VIOLATIONS ARE SUFFICIENTLY GROSS?

A: WE CONSIDER IT APPROPRIATE...OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ZAIRE...

6. Q: THEY'RE NOT GROSS VIOLATIONS?

A: NO. I'M NOT TRYING TO CHARACTERIZE OR REACT TO WHAT YOU HAVE SAID WITH REGARD TO THE LONG LIST OF THINGS THAT YOU HAVE READ OUT. YOU'RE ASKING ME, DO I CONSIDER OUR POLICY WITH REGARD TO ZAIRE APPROPRIATE, AND I'M ANSWERING YOU, YES.

7. Q: WHAT IS NEW FROM ZAIRE, BOTH IN TERMS OF SUPPLEMENTAL AID SHIPMENTS, ASSISTANCE SHIPMENTS AND THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND?

A: WELL ON THE SUPPLEMENTAL REQUEST, THAT'S STILL UNDER STUDY. I HAVE NO FURTHER DETAILS FOR YOU AT THIS TIME. ON THE GROUND, AGAIN REALLY NOT MUCH. THERE'S NOTHING TO REPORT AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED ON IT.

8. Q: ANY NEW READING ON CUBAN INVOLVEMENT?

A: NO, THAT REMAINS JUST THE WAY I'VE GIVEN IT TO YOU RECENTLY.

9. Q: ANYTHING ABOUT NIGERIANS ON THE DIPLOMATIC....?

A: BASICALLY WHAT THE SECRETARY SAID AT NOON YESTERDAY AND MY SLIGHT EXPANSION ON IT IS WHERE WE ARE WITH REGARD TO OUR ATTITUDE ON THE NIGERIAN INITIATIVE ON UNCLASSIFIED

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THE SITUATION IN ZAIRE.

10. Q: THERE WAS A REPORT IN THE MORNING NEWSPAPER, THIS MORNING THAT THERE IS ACTUALLY NO FIGHTING TAKING PLACE IN ZAIRE. BUT THE ZAIRIAN TROOPS MANY OF THEM HAVE JUST THROWN DOWN THEIR GUNS AND TAKEN OFF THE UNIFORMS AND MELTED INTO THE AREA. DO YOU HAVE ANY COMMENT ON THAT?

A: I DON'T I CAN'T CONFIRM OR REALLY OFFER YOU ANY KIND OF JUDGMENT ON THAT.

11. Q: FRED, IS THE UNITED STATES TALKING TO THE ANGOLANS?

A: WE DON'T HAVE RELATIONS WITH ANGOLA.

12. Q: I KNOW, YOU DON'T HAVE RELATIONS WITH CUBA...

A: NO CONTACT WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF ANGOLA.

13. Q: NO DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS...?

A: NO. I KNOW OF NO SUCH COMMUNICATIONS.

14. Q: COULD YOU CHECK THAT? CAN YOU QUESTION WHETHER THERE HAS BEEN CONTACT WITH ANGOLA?

A: WELL I THINK I CAN SAY NO. WE DON'T HAVE RELATIONS WITH ANGOLA AND I THINK I CAN SAY, I WILL CORRECT MYSELF LATER ON BUT AS A MATTER OF RECORD NOW I WILL SAY NO.

15. Q: YOU'RE NOT TRYING TO ESTABLISH CONTACT WITH THEM?

A: YOU'RE NOW ASKING ANOTHER QUESTION. I KNOW OF NO PLANS WHATSOEVER TO ESTABLISH CONTACT.

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16. Q: I'VE WONDERED, AS A POST SCRIPT IF THE NIGERIANS ARE TALKING TO THE ANGOLANS FOR YOU?

A: I DON'T KNOW WHAT THE NIGERIANS ARE DOING AT THE MOMENT IN THIS REGARD. THEY HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO MEDIATE BETWEEN ANGOLA AND ZAIRE, AS YOU KNOW. IT'S OUR UNDERSTANDING THAT NIGERIA RESPONDED TO A REQUEST FROM ZAIRE AND ALSO IN RESPONSE TO ITS OWN AND THE NIGERIAN'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE DANGERS FOR AFRICA INHERENT IN THIS INVASION. NOW AS TO WHAT THE NIGERIANS ARE ACTUALLY DOING, I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING ON THAT. YOU MIGHT WANT TO ASK THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT ITSELF, BUT I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANY KIND OF APPRAISAL OF WHAT IS HAPPENING AT THE MOMENT ON THAT.

17. Q: ANY OTHER AFRICAN COUNTRIES THAT YOU HAVE ALSO ASKED TO INTERCEDE IN THE CRISIS THERE?

A: I DON'T KNOW OF ANY OTHERS, WE'VE TALKED ONLY ABOUT NIGERIA. IT'S NOT A QUESTION OF ASKING THEM TO INTERCEDE, THIS WAS DONE, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, IN RESPONSE TO THE NIGERIAN PERCEPTION OF THE PROBLEM NOT AT OUR REQUEST.

18. Q: IT IS AN EFFORT TO BRING THE UNITED STATES OUT OF THIS... YOU'RE ANSWERING IT VERY CAREFULLY AND YOU MENTIONED NIGERIAN'S PERCEPTION AND ZAIRE'S REQUEST. DIDN'T YOU ASK THE NIGERIANS TO DO WHAT THEY COULD?

A: I SAID WE WERE HAPPY AND ENCOURAGED.

19. Q: DIDN'T YOU ASK THEM TO HAVE A GO AT IT?

A: NO. IT'S DEVELOPED JUST THE WAY I DESCRIBED IT TO YOU.

20. Q: IF WHAT FATHER DRINAN ANNOUNCED HAS BEEN PUBLIC
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INFORMATION ABOUT THIS MILITARY EQUIPMENT. MAYBE I

MISSED THIS ACTION, BUT YOU WERE NOTORIOUSLY OR RATHER NOTICABLY RELUCTANT TO DISCUSS ANYTHING ABOUT THE MILITARY AND I JUST WAS WONDERING DID I MISS SOMETIME WHERE YOU BEGAN TO TELL US WHAT THE MILITARY EQUIPMENT IS GOING TO ZAIRE OR...?

A: YOU'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT MILITARY EQUIPMENT GOING TO ZAIRE YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE ZAIRE YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT THE MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. WELL, I THINK YOU'RE CONFUSING SEVERAL THINGS. I TOOK YOUR INITIAL QUESTION EARLY IN THE BRIEFING TO REFER TO THE OVERALL MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM THAT THE UNITED STATES HAS OR ARRANGED AND ORGANIZED OVER THE LAST FISCAL YEAR OR TWO. THAT'S WHAT FATHER DRINAN IS REFERRING TO. NOT REFERRING TO, IF I UNDERSTAND YOU CORRECTLY, TO THE TWO PLANE LOADS OF EQUIPMENT WHICH WE SENT OUT...

21. Q: IF YOU'RE SURE THAT'S WHAT THEY WERE REFERRING TO I UNDERSTOOD IT IS MORE THAN THAT WAS ALREADY IN THE PIPELINE.

A: NO. EVERYTHING THAT HAS GONE OUT IN THE TWO PLANE LOADS HAS BEEN PART OF THE EXISTING....

22. Q: THERE'S NO NEW MILITARY AID TO ZAIRE. IS THAT WHAT YOU'RE SAYING?

A: YES.

23. Q: ARE YOU SAYING THAT THERE IS NO NEW MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO ZAIRE.

A: THAT IS CORRECT.

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Message Attributes

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